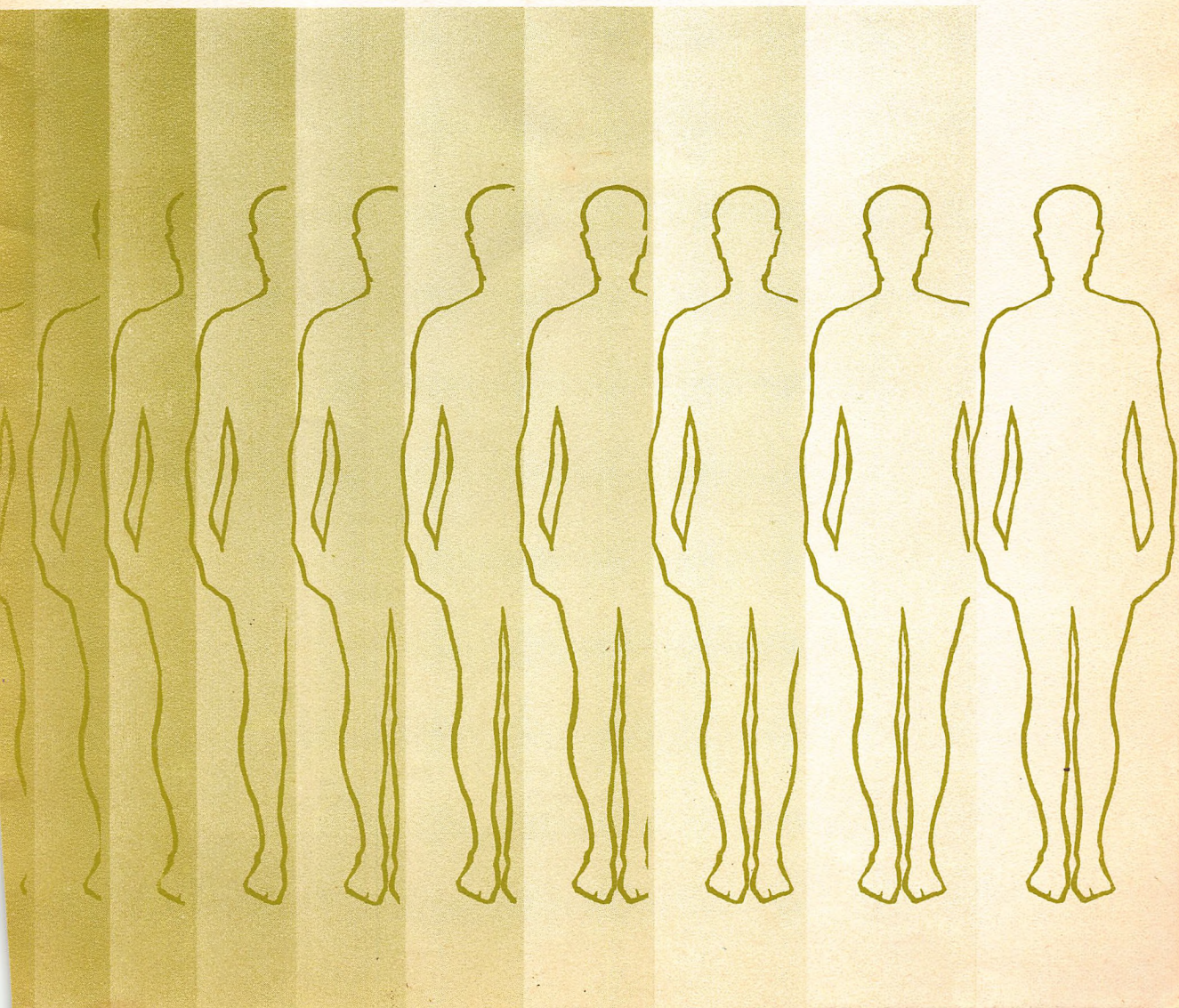


# TEN STEPS TO SELF- FULFILLMENT

By Robert G. Chaney

STEP 8

The Secret of Serenity





Illustrations by Teodors Liliensteins

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# TEN STEPS TO SELF-FULFILLMENT

*By Robert G. Chaney*

## STEP 8

### THE FOURTH MYSTICAL LAW:

## The Secret of Serenity

### The Law of Rest

"It is a movement and a rest," was the cryptic answer given by Jesus to the follower who asked, "What is a sign of the Father in you?"

We explored this answer in Step 6 when we studied the Law of Cycles. Now we examine another phase of it in its mystical application to the *Law of Rest*. It will tell us how to gain the secret of serenity and further fulfill the Self.

It tells us first that there are alternate cycles of activity and non-activity. Yet, esoterically and actually there is no such thing as non-activity. However, it is possible to minimize physical activity so that non-physical activity can occur. We must distinguish between unseen activity on the inner planes of life and the observable activity that occurs in an objectified way on the outer planes.

The Book of Genesis states: *...and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had made.*

This statement has given rise to the observance of the Sabbath, or day of rest. It is frequently interpreted to mean not only a day of spiritual attunement but a day on which no work is done. In the Talmud, it is explained that work is anything constructive or destructive in a physical sense. Thus, according to Talmudic law, on the Sabbath a man may carry a chair from one house to another but he may not build a fire or conduct any kind of business.



So the Scripture can be interpreted to mean that, while outer activity may have been held in abeyance on the seventh day (or age as many interpret it), inner activity continued, and is still in process at this very moment. Principally, it is through your association with this inner activity that you acquire the serenity which is the subject of this lesson, for this quality is necessary if you are to become a whole person rather than remain a fraction.

A fraction is only part of a person. He may be very intelligent, but his intelligence is limited to his conscious mind. In other words, his intelligence doesn't go as far as his Self does. He isn't an integrated Self. A unit is a completely integrated Self which includes the whole person.

Your interest in these lessons thus far indicates your desire to be a whole person, a unit rather than a fraction, and there are two ways you may be limiting yourself. Both ways lead to lack of serenity in your normal consciousness, for it actually expresses a vague uneasiness when it is not functioning as a complete unit harmoniously with the elements in which it is involved.

The two ways in which you lose serenity by becoming fractionalized are:

1. through time...by allowing your consciousness to function productively only during your waking hours and neglecting the nearly one-third of your twenty-four hour day spent in sleep;
2. through being...by expressing only through your normal consciousness and neglecting the sub- and super-conscious levels of your mind, neglecting the lines of supersensory communication between your normal consciousness and the higher dimensions of life, including the Infinite Being.

These two fractionalizing factors possess implications which lead us to twelve ways in which you can acquire serenity. But before examining them, we might ask what is accomplished by becoming serene? "Won't it make me less intense about achieving my goals in life and therefore less successful?"



WHAT SERENITY WILL DO FOR YOU

Serenity is defined as *calmness of mind, composure, an unclouded state*. Although you are serene, you may at times be troubled. Even so, you can approach your problems and aspirations with a quality of consciousness that is determined and forceful. If you can become serene, you will accomplish four eminently worthwhile goals:

1. increase personal efficiency,
2. decrease errors,
3. give inner emphasis to all your efforts,
4. improve your intuitive expressions.

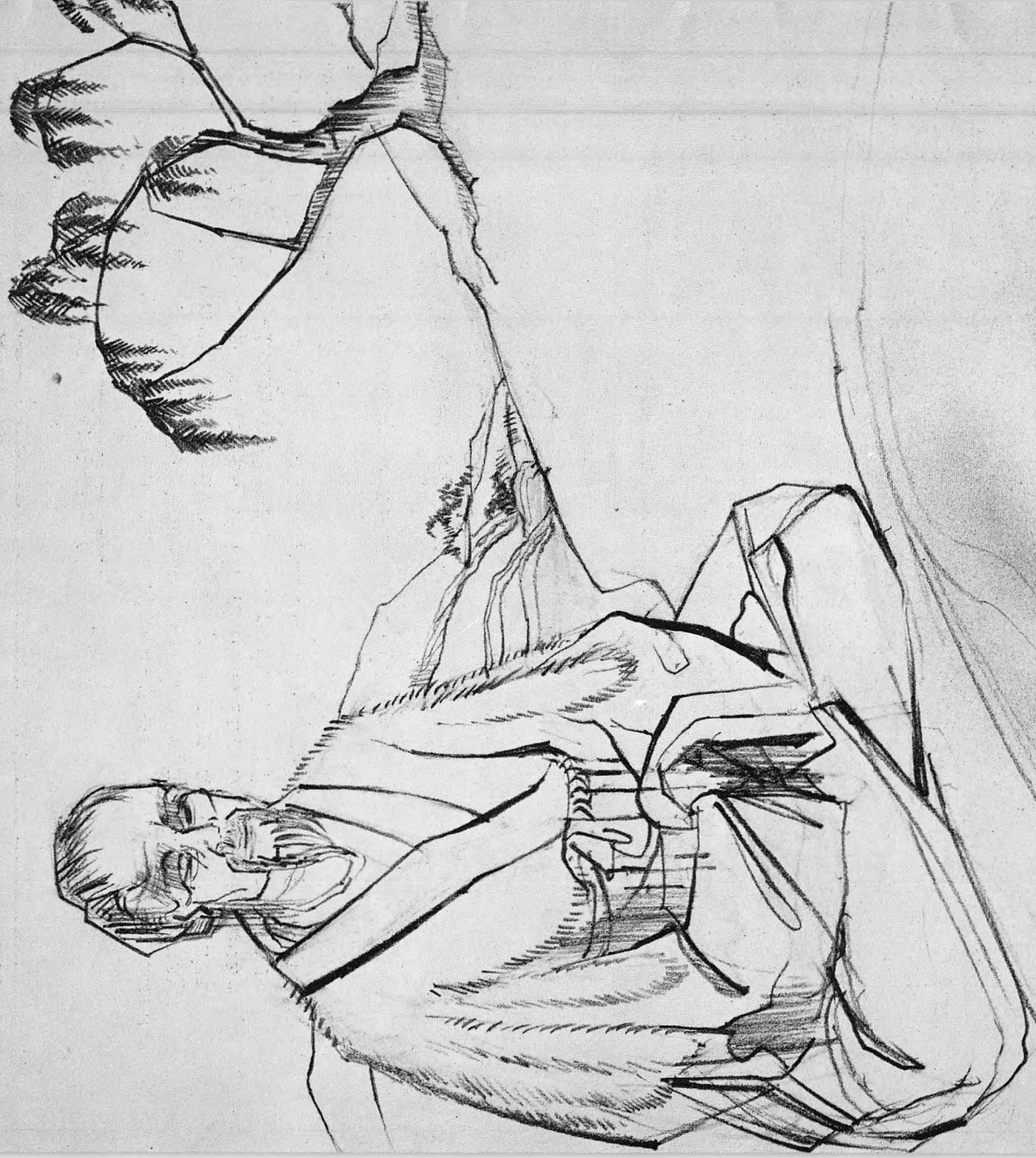
A troubled mind negates all these benefits. A dramatic illustration of what can be accomplished through inner serenity recently came to my attention through a news story of a native of France who had his appendix removed before TV cameras...without anesthesia!

Pierre Francois Savineau, a captain in the Merchant Marine, achieved a state of serenity for this remarkable feat by listening to records which helped induce the serene state (not hypnosis in which his consciousness would have been suspended) and by telling himself there would be no pain. He was completely conscious during the operation, was slightly nauseated, but said he hardly noticed any pain.

Pain usually arises from tension, the opposite of serenity. There are many women who experience childbirth under similar conditions. I've witnessed it in our own home when our daughter Sita was born without anesthesia being administered to my wife, Earlyne, who had previously cultivated her calmness of mind regarding the process. Earlyne expressed much more calmness of mind than did I or her sister Lila (we were present for the birth) or even the doctor himself! She experienced pain only during the last five minutes when the physician became unnecessarily hurried, lost his composure, and inflicted the pain himself.

Some 300 years B.C. there lived a man named Chuang-tze. He was a follower of Taoism, and left writings concerning that philosophy which are still rich in meaning today. Among his teachings we find the following:





When water is still, it is like a mirror,  
Reflecting the beard and the eyebrows.  
It gives the accuracy of the water level,  
And the philosopher makes it his model.  
And if water thus derives lucidity from  
stillness,

How much more the faculties of the mind?  
The mind of the sage being in repose  
Becomes the mirror of the universe,  
The speculum of all creation.



Why did wise old Chuang-tze select water as the object of comparative analysis in his philosophical allegory?

First, because like the mind it is capable of being in either an agitated or tranquil state.

Second, when agitated it is a destructive rather than constructive agent, which is also frequently true of the mind.

And third, because when water is still it captures (reflects) essences other than itself. When the mind is in repose it becomes conscious (reflective) of essences higher and nobler than itself.

The quiet mind "becomes the mirror of the universe." It becomes a "speculum of all creation." A speculum is a special kind of mirror that enables one to see within an object. Thus the speculum of creation enables one to gain insight into the eternal creative process.

The agitated mind expresses power, but it is all too frequently uncontrolled or at least misdirected. The calm mind is equally powerful, but is coupled with the advantages of possessing understanding, of being properly directed, of creating harmony rather than resistance and, finally, of fulfilling the higher Self rather than the lower.

How do you acquire such serenity?

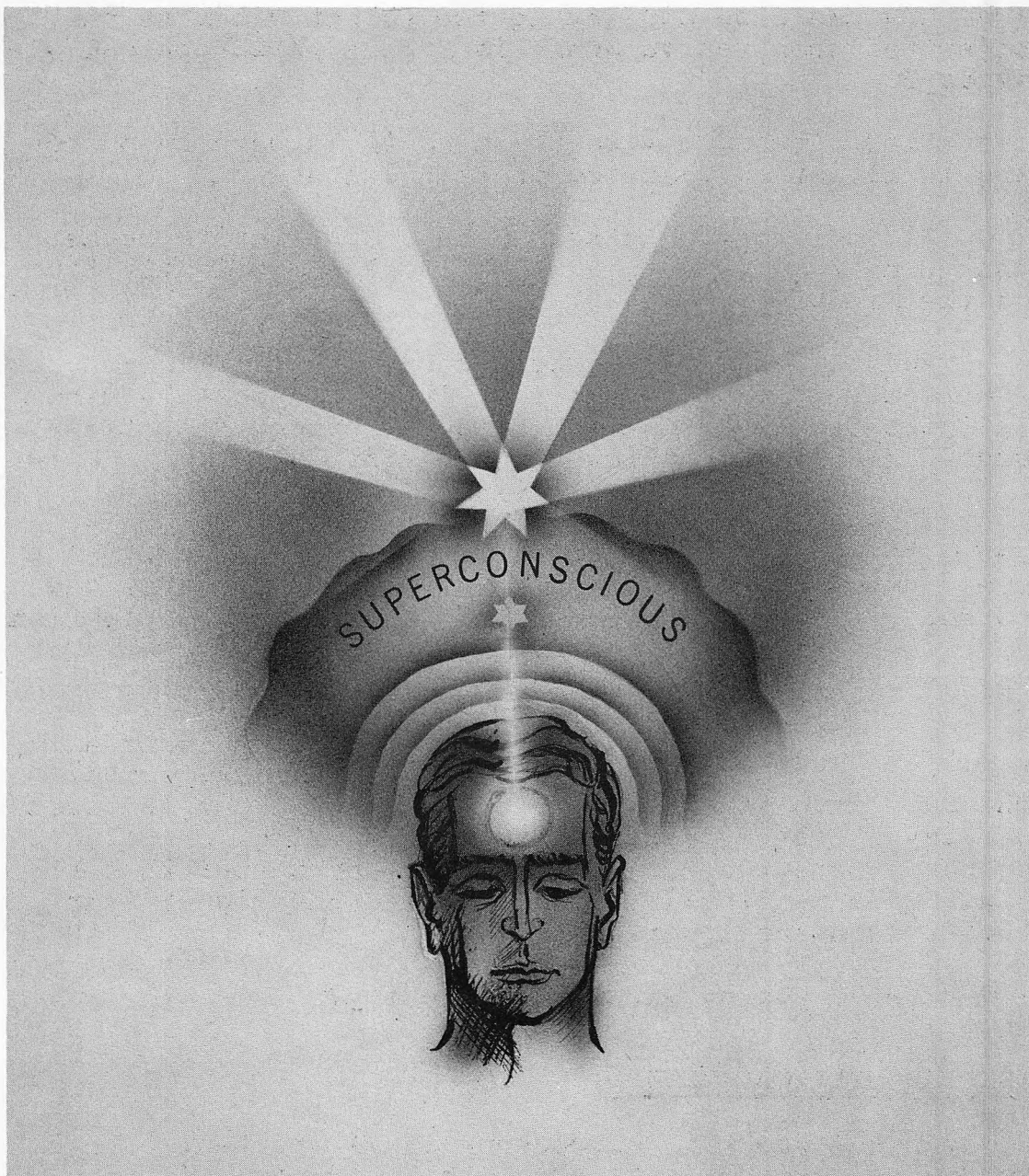
#### USE THE MYSTICAL METHOD

*In the Book of Deuteronomy it is written: ...the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good...if thou shalt harken unto the voice of the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul...the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.*

William James, one of the world's greatest psychologists, says that psychology and normal intellectual processes concern themselves with only a small part of man's consciousness. That the more infinite and significant consciousness of man is outside those areas. (The underlining is mine.)

He was referring to man's mystical consciousness. Mysticism and the mystical experience become the foun-





*The more infinite and significant consciousness of man, above his normal psychological and intellectual processes. (Explored in depth in Astara's Degree Lessons.)*

tainhead of communication between you and your inner Self, whether on a purely individual level or in areas which strike a responsive note in others.

But mysticism cannot be categorized into exact and organized formulas. There are differing shades and levels of the mystic experience which relate to each of



us. They are difficult to define because they are very personal and are therefore conditioned and colored by our own backgrounds, our aims and desires in life. What may be a remarkable and intuitive or mystic revelation to me might not be to you, and vice versa. But each of us can translate our experiences into some tangible means of expression which we can understand and turn to our profit.

Through a mystical experience you may receive some tremendously meaningful revelation. It will probably be so personal you cannot reach a concise conclusion about it or communicate it to others. Yet it will contribute to your own tranquility and help you meet your problems, responsibilities, and even adversities, with a serene and composed mind.

That "the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and thy heart" is the starting point toward the achievement of serenity, and all its benefits. Your acceptance of this fact...that serenity is not the result of outer circumstances, but inner conditions and experiences...leads us to the twelve specific ways in which it can be acquired.

## 12 WAYS TO ACQUIRE SERENITY

I am fully aware that offering these twelve ways to acquire serenity presents certain hazards. It is easy to expect knowledge of a method to perform something which only use of a method will accomplish.

Yet I have confidence that you, as a sincere student of your own greater potentials, realize that not any of these twelve ways relieve you of responsibility. Nor do they offer an easy way to accomplishment. They reinforce your ability to be a responsible, Self-filled person. But they help you only if you use them.

Another hazard is to expect too much too quickly. As you consider each of the methods that follow, you must understand that each requires development and practice. You are not simply turning on a switch that produces the miracle of productive tranquility. You are constructing the wiring system that makes the light possible. Time will be required to become proficient at any of the methods with which you are not already familiar.

Not all the points which follow are completely mystical in themselves. Yet each has its mystical con-



notation, leading to a fruitful relationship with greater dimensions of your Self and its association with still higher levels of life.

In simple form, the twelve ways to acquire serenity are:

1. creative sleep,
2. breath,
3. affirmation,
4. faith,
5. self-control,
6. autosuggestion,
7. right knowledge,
8. meditation -- prayer,
9. inspirational reading,
10. art and decoration,
11. thought patterns,
12. isolation.

#### CREATIVE SLEEP

Sleep is planting time for the superconscious Self.

When your conscious mind is occupied with the necessities of daily living it's not oriented to the impulses which emanate from its superconscious level.

*...commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still,* is the instruction hidden in the Fourth Psalm of the Holy Bible.

But wait...I'm not suggesting that when you retire you should spend a restless night worrying about a problem or objective. That's anything but creative sleep. Nor do I suggest that you dismiss it entirely from your mind and fall into unconsciousness as a retreat from responsibility.

When you retire, think about your problem or ob-



jective in a creative way. Can I do this about it? Can I do that? Do not attempt to arrive at an answer. Simply consider any possibilities that occur to you. Then put the concern about it out of your mind by replacing it with other thoughts that are conducive to sleep.

For example, you might mentally sing a restful song or hymn. You might imagine yourself in the relaxing atmosphere of a beautiful garden. Or in the company of pleasant companions. Use your imagination to create any kind of peaceful atmosphere that is relaxing and conducive to the release of tension. Do a few physical exercises, or deep breathing exercises. Listen to relaxing music, such as Astara's meditation recordings. By experiment you will discover the best method to relax body and mind, and induce sleep, without thinking of your problem or objective again. Any and all these ideas help establish the serenity of consciousness in which higher levels of your Self function more easily and effectively.

After sleep begins, your consciousness is still active, but with a better connection with your High Self, with your superconscious mind, and with all the higher levels from which you may receive assistance. That assistance may come to you in various forms:

1. A dream. Keep pencil and paper at your bedside to make notes of any dream immediately upon awakening or you will forget it, however improbable that possibility may seem.

2. A later impression upon your consciousness. This may occur upon awakening or at any time later in the day.

3. Non-conscious guidance. Without realizing why, you may be led to circumstances which are beneficial to your problem or objective.

Nearly one-third of your life is spent in sleep. If various levels of your Self are active during this period, are you not wise to take every possible advantage of it? Creative sleep experiences have solved many problems and contributed many ways to attainment for the world's most successful people in every field of endeavor. If you wish to become a whole person use all the time available to you, and your entire being, through creative sleep.



BREATH

The use of breath has been a subject considered in several of our 10 Steps. It enters our Self-fulfillment process again at this point.

I recently participated in a workshop held for professional speakers which included some of the world's best known platform personalities. One of the other persons who participated was a speech pathologist from the University of Southern California. He said that tension is the greatest stumbling block with which the speaker must cope...that there is a definite relationship between good voice and clear thinking...and that one of the best ways to relax tension (or to practice the law of serenity) is to use deep breathing, abdominal breathing rather than chest breathing.

The ancient yogi found that breathing exercises established serenity in the physical body and allowed higher elements of the Self to function. He found that breathing exercises open the connection between normal consciousness and higher consciousness, between higher consciousness and still higher elements of life, between the Self and the Infinite.

In proper deep breathing (not considering special breathing exercises, which are discussed in Astara's First Degree Lessons), the chest does not expand and contract, but the abdomen does. Just as we normally use but a portion of our minds, so do we also use but a portion of our breathing capacity.

When the breath is shallow, the heart, throat and upper centers are restricted and tensed. Deep breathing results in composure of consciousness and relaxation of body (to say nothing of the purely physical benefits). Take two, slow, deep breaths right now and notice how tension is released from the muscles of your chest, arms and legs.

These physical reactions are immediately observable. Not so easily seen but actual nonetheless, is the release of tension from your mind and emotions.

A simple exercise to follow, two or three times daily, is to exhale completely and gently force every bit of air from the lungs by contracting the abdominal muscles completely. Then slowly and easily inhale as your abdomen expands. Two or three deep breaths of this kind will be enough each time. It should not be overdone. Practice moderation. You will be surprised



at the tranquility which this creates in your consciousness, and at the sense of inner strength it creates. You see, you have aligned yourself with the placid but powerful forces of life's greater dimensions.

### AFFIRMATION

Some persons think that an affirmation (a positive statement of an inner condition) is a way of telling God what to do and how to do it. If we think about it for a moment we quickly see this just isn't true.

*An affirmation is a method of aligning your mind with Cosmic Mind and with Cosmic Forces.*

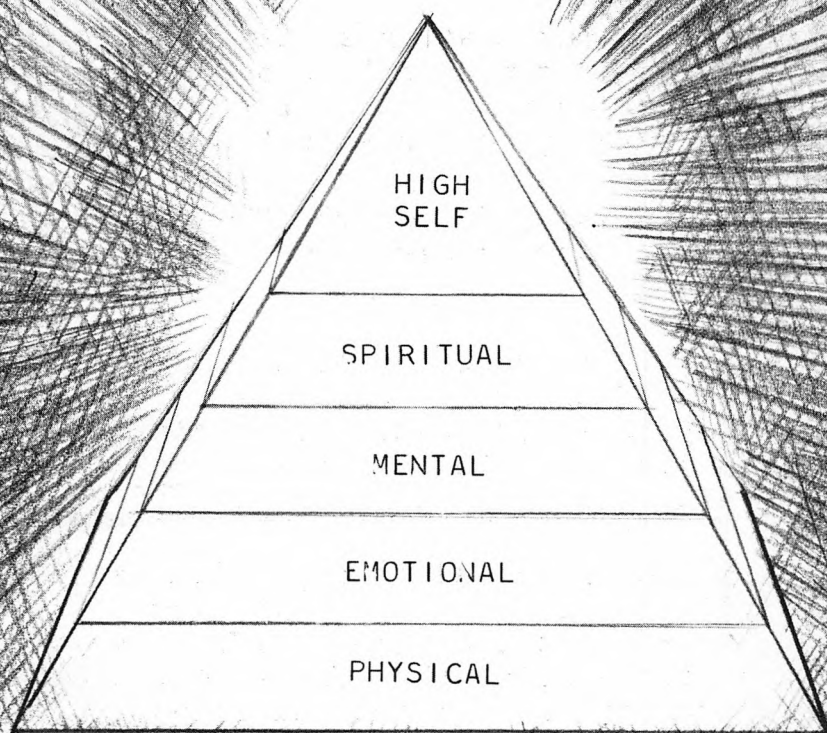
When the Astarian says, "I am surrounded by the pure white light of the Christ," he is not creating that condition. He is impressing upon his own consciousness the fact that the condition does exist, and is inwardly reinforcing his relationship to it.

An affirmation is a way of expanding the fraction of self to include all the Self, including the God which is an inherent part of that Self. Like the mason's trowel which spreads the mortar to unite separate building blocks into one complete building, an affirmation is a tool you may use to unify all the elements of your being, physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.

The mortar which the trowel of affirmation molds into a unifying essence is *psychic energy*. Psychic energy is one of the most powerful ingredients imaginable. It is present in all persons and living things everywhere but becomes cohesive only when given purpose and direction. You give it these qualities by your frequently repeated affirmation.

Like Aladdin's genie of the lamp, psychic energy accepts the consciousness you impart to it and begins the unifying process as soon as your mental direction is given. However, if your affirmation gives one command, and your normal thoughts and actions give the opposite command, it fluctuates between the two; its efforts on your behalf are hindered or even completely negated. So when you use an affirmation, do your utmost to maintain the attitude which it designates. Thus the unifying element of psychic energy is enhanced.





*An affirmation fuses and unifies all the elements of your being: physical, emotional, mental and spiritual.*

Remember that the principal purpose of an affirmation is to change the focal point of your consciousness from being centered on only part of yourself (a physical illness for example) and align it with the higher elements of your Self and God.



FAITH

Innumerable volumes have been written about faith, and I shall say but little here. What I do say will have little in common with most teachings on the subject.

Faith is usually described as an unshakable adherence to a principle, person or belief for which little or no proof can be offered.

I feel that faith is simply a positive attitude about something. It is not merely adopting an attitude contrary to whatever evidence is at hand. Faith is understanding. Faith is acceptance of what you understand.

If you understand that there are higher elements of your Self which function in dimensions of which you are not normally conscious, you have faith. If you believe your own understanding, you have faith.

Faith is a commodity that comes in degrees. The greater the degree of acceptance, the greater the faith. The more you believe your own understanding, and the more you act upon your acceptance, the more serenity faith contributes to your life.

Anything you believe with little or no reservation is a potent power in your life. But whatever you believe with understanding and acceptance penetrates deeply into subconscious areas of your mind and becomes even more powerful. Faith, therefore, harmonizes subconscious, conscious and supraconscious segments of your mind and thus enables you to function as a unified being.

Faith is a quality that develops slowly, like the growth of a giant redwood tree. Once it takes root it is unshakable and resists the storms and the droughts with unsurpassed majesty and permanence.

SELF-CONTROL

*He who does not lose his center endures*, says the Taoist scripture quoted on the title page of Step 1.

If you would not "lose your center" you must practice self-control. For many of us this may be one of the most difficult paths to serenity, yet it is one of the most productive.



Your emotional force center is a powerful dynamo of expression. It attempts to be the sovereign ruler in your life. It wants to control not only its own kingdom but also the neighboring kingdoms of body and mind. But it is not the *center* of your Self. Your mind is the center...body and emotions are below it, spirit and God-Self are above it.

Consciousness is the directing agency, or should be, in your life at this moment. It is surprising how many people surrender the directive influence of consciousness to their environments and the outer circumstances of their lives. They lose their centers. The only way to maintain it is through the practice of self-control. Note the use of the word *practice*, for self-control is acquired by practicing self-control until it becomes an ingrained habit from which you cannot be shaken.

To practice self-control you needn't await the emergency or crisis of an actual experience. You can practice in your imagination, and the experience you thus receive will stand you in good stead when an actual occurrence arises in the future. You can practice by re-living a situation in which you did not demonstrate self-control. Recreate the scene as vividly as your imagination allows, but this time speak and act in a composed way.

This imaginary but true-life game will serve to impress upon your mind the value and pattern of self-control. Then each time an actual situation tests you, you will think, act and speak with the added experience which your imagination provided, and it will be much easier to maintain "your center."

Yes, it requires will power, even in imagination. But you have it, and you can use it.

### AUTOSUGGESTION

To practice autosuggestion is to keep repeating an idea to yourself until it becomes thoroughly ingrained in all the elements of your Self as well as your normal consciousness.

An example would be to keep telling yourself that you are a poised and serene person until your outbursts of emotion gradually decrease and you become just the type of individual you have regularly described.



*As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.* Whatever you think in your normal consciousness is one level of your Self, and what you think in your heart brings additional levels into activity. Through autosuggestion you create the thought pattern that focuses and directs these additional levels. Autosuggestion does even more.

Just as the potentials of life and growth are buried, hidden and unseen, in the seed of a plant or tree, so are the same potentials buried in the interior regions of your Self. The difference between the potential in a tree, for instance, and in you, is vast indeed. The potential in the tree is predestined to express only those qualities which it inherently possesses. But the potential in you is in large part subject to factors you impose upon it. Your consciousness, hopefully under intuitively received direction from your Self, can change the amount and the kind of growth which is to be expressed.

You may, in fact, call this inner potential itself a seed. It's a Seed of Life. Or an inner God-Seed. It's an invisible inner center from which springs the kind of magnetic force that helps you create the circumstances of your life. Let us say that you wish to become a musician. No matter how often you impress this fact upon the inner seed through autosuggestion, it will not make you a musician. However, it will help bring to the surface of your life those qualities which propel you toward your goal. It will constantly make you more conscious of music and your relation to it. It will help you find, and even more important to recognize, opportunities in your chosen field.

But if you use autosuggestion about becoming a musician today, and tomorrow about becoming a druggist, and the next day about becoming a secretary -- oh no. It just won't do. The different types of autosuggestion will work against each other and little good will be accomplished.

To practice autosuggestion doesn't necessarily mean to strain with continuous and intense effort of thought on a desired goal. Autosuggestion can be calm, but it should be precise and definite. It should be practiced with regularity. Then it should be forgotten until your next regular autosuggestion session with yourself.

Is it compatible with the law of serenity? Yes, in this sense: that autosuggestion is inner activity



while outer activity is at rest. It can be practiced just before sleep or during any quiet hour of repose during the day.

### RIGHT KNOWLEDGE

Followers of the Buddha are expected to practice what is known as *The Noble Eight-fold Path*. The very first step of this Buddhist formula for attainment is *Right Knowledge*.

It is possible to acquire knowledge of many kinds. Much of it cannot be said to contribute to serenity or a productive expression of your Self. If, in the practice of life, you will use your faculty of discrimination (either the discrimination of logic or intuition, and there are both kinds) you will begin to acquire that helpful kind of knowledge that can only be described as "right knowledge."

If you have ever examined closely any statues of the Buddha, you will have noticed that almost without exception they display the quality of serenity. Basically, that is what Buddhism is all about -- the establishment of inner serenity through which Nirvana, or a state of bliss, is attained. The Noble Eight-fold Path is a combination of inner and outer activities which help the practitioner gain the goal of bliss. The eight steps of the doctrine are:

1. Right Knowledge
2. Right Intention
3. Right Speech
4. Right Conduct
5. Right Means of Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration

Note that of these eight steps, four are inner activities and four are outer activities. The first two and the last two are inner activities. The beginning and the end are inner activities. The inner are the



more important, for if they are properly conducted the outer will take care of themselves.

Also note that, if these eight steps were placed in circular form, right concentration would lead again to right knowledge. Thus the eight-fold path becomes a cycle that should be repeated over and over again. That is why this concept is often symbolized by the illustration of a wheel with eight spokes...the wheel has no beginning or ending. In actual practice, hopefully, the return to the first step signals the beginning of a spiral...the cycle is repeated, but on a higher level.

### MEDITATION-PRAYER

The lonely shepherd of Biblical times gazed upon the vast quietness of nature surrounding him as he tended his flock. The tranquility of his vigil led him to moods of meditation about life, his place in it, and his relation to the Infinite. Being separated from men he thought much about God.

He discovered that when he was active, moving his flock from pasture to pasture, or warding off the attack of a marauding mountain lion, his mind was oriented to the immediate needs of the moment. But when he rested, was in repose, the serenity of the tranquil surroundings influenced his consciousness to dwell upon eternal themes and a realization of his inner nature and its relation to the Infinite. In time he evolved a simple but potent concept which he stated in a short sentence. The concept finally became part of the 46th Psalm, which says,

*Be still and know that I am God.*

Although I realize that each person has evolved his own idea concerning meditation and prayer, it seems to me that the basic principle is contained in these few words.

BE STILL: Let the outer self, the physical and emotional natures and the normal consciousness, become quiet. Release any strain or tension that might be present. See not with physical eye and hear not with physical ear.

AND KNOW: Direct your consciousness to the inner center of your being. Hold in your mind (*know*) the idea that you are establishing a direct connection with the Infinite Being.



Many have discovered that Astara's meditation records help them create the meditative and prayerful state in which serenity is achieved.





THAT I AM GOD: Feel the sense of oneness that permeates your mind, emotions, and even your physical self. Rapport with the Infinite has been created and becomes dominant throughout your being. You have truly arrived at that state of realization which was once described in the words, *I am in the Father, and the Father is in me.*

It is in this state of spiritual reverie, and conscious attunement with God, that meditation and prayer become effective and act as direct aids to fulfilling your Self. What you should meditate upon, what you should pray about, while in this higher consciousness, is a personal and private matter. Whatever is selected has been brought to the altar of the Most High and is there endowed with the spiritual qualities of the Infinite Being. You have aligned yourself, and your Self, with the inner God-Presence. You have established oneness with your Self, oneness with the Infinite, and oneness with all life. In the life of man there is no higher expression.

Many have discovered that Astara's meditation records help them create the meditative and prayerful state in which oneness is achieved. And there are other, outer activities that lead to serenity.

#### INSPIRATIONAL READING

The daily paper doesn't contribute to serenity. The modern novel or magazine is anything but restful. Because of this some people have given up reading entirely. When I am troubled, what shall I read?

Read the entire 46th Psalm from which I quoted the sentence, "Be still and know that I am God." You may have a preference for other Bible passages, or scriptures of any religion.

Read Astara's Degree Lessons, for they contribute to understanding, and understanding results in serenity.

Read books such as the Aquarian Gospel and the works of Gibran. Read anything that truly inspires you with the qualities you seek. As you read, mark the passages that appeal to you. Then, in troublous times you can glance quickly through the pages and reread the excerpts that are meaningful to you. Reading reinforces your consciousness with the ideas that help you most. It impresses those ideas more firmly upon your subconscious which then acts in harmony with them.



## ART and DECORATION

Many years ago I was employed in the advertising and display department of a large grocery chain. Several stores were selected to test customer reaction to the colors with which they were painted. It was discovered that the tones which were more relaxing, less stimulating and irritating, actually increased both the number of customers and the amount of sales to each customer.

What tones predominate in your home or office? Do they stimulate emotions? Do they irritate? Do they confuse?

Does the painting that hangs in your living room or office create an atmosphere of relaxation and restfulness, or does it contribute a jarring note or even a shock to the emotions? Colors, decorations, even furnishings and articles of clothing, all cause a visual impact upon your consciousness and thus influence your inner nature. Each person has his own preferences based upon his own responses. So I shall attempt to offer no rules in this respect. But a study and analysis of your personal reactions will enable you to surround yourself with visual stimuli that adjust your consciousness in the way that benefits you.

Now let us turn again to another inner quality that helps make us serene.

## THOUGHT PATTERNS

How do you face the day at its beginning?

It seems to be the nature of some people to be optimistic, and others to be pessimistic. It is the nature of some to start on a note of conflict, and others on a note of harmony. But these individual variations are merely the outward expressions of inner thought patterns that have been established through the years.

Anyone can quickly see the value of the optimistic, harmonious thought pattern. But creating it and maintaining it is another matter. It requires will power and determination.

If you do habitually express an adverse thought pattern, and can recognize that fact, you have made a major step toward self-improvement. To reinforce your will power and determination, I suggest that you exper-



iment with the psychological "trick" of personifying the quality you wish to express. For example, you can imagine that there is another person in you, a person who is happy and harmonious with his surroundings, his work, his associates, his family. You can imagine how he acts in various situations and how much he enjoys what he is doing, how confident and serene he is.

Then you can join him on his journey through the day. Simple, isn't it? But effective if you will try it. The more you practice this little psychological activity the more you establish the desired thought pattern as your natural, habitual way of life. What you are actually doing is activating, or emphasizing, that portion of your Self that really is the confident, harmonious, serene being you have imagined. This is the real you, dormant until your imagination brought it to life.

And now...to our last method of practicing the secret of serenity.

### ISOLATION

To find our relationship with the One, we must sometimes isolate ourselves from the many.

We must occasionally rest from our labors. We must occasionally refrain from association with others, even those we dearly love. There is a positive and productive value in rest, relaxation, and solitude.

The POSITIVE value of solitude: Things and people of the everyday world have a tendency to draw us downward to their own level. Through periods of isolation from them we momentarily sever the ties that tend to pull us toward the mundane level and give greater opportunity to the ties that lift us toward higher levels. We negate the pull of gravity in favor of the elevating force of levitation.

You are a focal point midway between the two, but because of the mass of mundane force the tendency is toward the lower. To offset that tendency, occasional periods of almost complete severance from the lower are of inestimable value.

The PRODUCTIVE value of solitude: The lower the center of your everyday consciousness (not in the sense of morals but of concentrated attention to mundane affairs), the less opportunity for Self-expression. Oc-



casional isolation from mundane affairs, periods of complete rest from everyday activity, will reorient your consciousness to the Self and its intuitive impulses.

A complete twenty-four hour period of isolation from the world, its problems and its people, during which there is neither work nor play, can accomplish wonders.

### HAPPINESS IS SERENITY

Serenity and happiness are nearly synonymous terms. What makes you happy? Before you begin thinking of things that may make you happy, let's consider states of being.

For example, a \$10,000 home may make one person happy while another might be miserable with a \$50,000 mansion. The state of consciousness, then, is the determining factor rather than outward objects themselves.

In an effort to discover the basics of happiness I've arrived at a list of four, not all of them desirable from the standpoint of Self-fulfilment:

1. ignorance,
2. superior knowledge,
3. will power,
4. spiritual attunement.

Ignorance: The person with an almost complete lack of knowledge is totally uncomplicated in his life. He isn't dismayed by the problems of life simply because he is unaware of their existence. With the coming of knowledge there also arrives a realization that problems exist, and serenity is usually lost in the process. But the serenity of ignorance isn't an attractive kind.

Superior knowledge: A highly trained intellect, a mind chock full of facts and figures, isn't enough. A superior knowledge includes understanding of the Self, its potentials, its relation to all life and the Infinite.

Will power: An uncompromising inner determination to be happy in spite of problems leads to serenity. It



isn't an easy way, but it has its place, and there are many times when it is most productive.

Spiritual attunement: The achievement of at-onement through spiritual attunement with the higher elements of your own being and with greater dimensions of life is the sure way to serenity. One might say that spiritual attunement is an exercise in serenity.

Just as finger exercises on the piano lead to dexterity in playing that instrument, so do mental exercises in spiritual attunement lead to proficient ability in living a serene life.

For life to be serene, it must contain values that are important to us. We live in a world which, on its outer surface, continually robs us of those values. The only place to which we can go to have them restored is the higher dimension of the Self and through it the still higher dimension of the Infinite.

Spiritual attunement, then, is a means of strengthening present values and acquiring new ones that enable us to maintain tranquility. I've said that serenity and happiness are nearly synonymous terms. Complete, unbounded, every minute happiness is hardly possible for the one who decides to express his inherent worth-whileness in an encounter with the world. But on those occasions when ultimate happiness isn't present, serenity is still possible.



*Happiness results from states of consciousness.*



Someone once penned the words:

*This quiet time I own as mine own land;  
I come here when I want to understand.*

I can think of no better way to say that a time of separation from the world will help you attain serenity. Every attainment of the state which Jesus described when he said, *Let not your heart be troubled, and be not afraid*, will have its impact on your life and your efforts when you return to the world which you momentarily put aside.

It is recorded in the Book of Isaiah: *They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.*

To wait upon the Lord is certainly not to sit back and expect God to do everything for you. In modern metaphysical terminology, it is to polarize your consciousness in the Divine dimensions of life. In this concept we discover the final secret of serenity. This polarization of your consciousness is accomplished through one or more of the twelve ways to acquire serenity you have just finished reading. Now that you have read them, decide what you are going to do about them.

We have two more steps in our 10 Steps to Self-Fulfillment. We are drawing near the end of our journey...which can be the most thrilling and productive journey you have ever undertaken. But at this point we may be in somewhat the same state as was the Cosmos before it became organized into solar systems.

So our next step is to study the forces and methods we will use to organize our lives...*From Chaos to Cosmos*...the law of organization, the fifth mystical law.

